

## ***II. SITE DESCRIPTION***

Topographically, the site can be characterized in its eastern portion by gently rolling hills cut intermittently by small drainage course running east to northwest. A north-south ridgeline roughly bisects the site. West of this ridgeline, the site is much steeper and the drainage courses become canyons which widen and deepen as they run to the west/northwest. Elevations on site range from 1660 at the high points of the ridgeline to 1320 in the northwestern corner. Slopes on the eastern half of the site are mostly less than 10%, while slopes in the western portion often exceed 30% especially in steeper canyon areas. The eastern site area drains toward Sycamore Canyon Boulevard and Highway 60 to ultimately reach Box Springs Canyon. The western area drains mainly into Sycamore Canyon.

Soils on site, typical of the project area, are granitic in origin and nature. Topsoils are thin and cover a granitic bedrock which is weathered to varying degrees. Soils are rippable to a depth of about 30 feet although blasting may be required in some areas. Otherwise, soils on site are suitable for development.

No known faults exist on site, and the nearest active fault, the San Jacinto Fault is located approximately six miles to the northeast. The site therefore falls within normal-high and normal-low risk use categories. No hazards associated with liquefaction, seiches, flooding, landslides, falling rock, settlement, or ground rupture have been identified.

Vegetative cover on the site is typically very open with only sparse cover of shrubs on most areas. The flatter portions of the site have been farmed and/or grazed recently. Due to the disturbed nature of the site, and the lack of unique rock or soil habitats, sensitive plant species neither occur on the project site nor are known to occur in adjacent areas. Regionally, those portions of the site lying west of the north-south ridgeline are tributary to Sycamore Canyon and are therefore part of a regionally significant ecosystem.

Wildlife populations on site are limited due to the sparse vegetative cover. One rare and endangered species, the Stephens Kangaroo Rat, is known to occur west of the ridgeline. Exact locations of habitat and population were identified in detailed survey and trapping programs conducted for Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan and for the annexation of the remaining 60 acres of Sycamore Highlands. The most significant populations will be preserved within the area designated as natural open space to be included within Sycamore Canyon Park. No significant cultural resources are known or expected to occur on site.

The project is potentially impacted by two noise sources - aircraft noise from March Air Force Base and vehicle noise from Highway 60. Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan guidelines for mitigating noise impacts from these sources will be followed.

